

## NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

### WATERING FACILITY

(No.)  
CODE 614

#### DEFINITION

A device (tank, trough, or other watertight container) for providing animal access to water.

#### PURPOSE

To provide watering facilities for livestock and/or wildlife at selected locations in order to:

- protect and enhance vegetative cover through proper distribution of grazing;
- provide erosion control through better grassland management, protect streams, ponds, and water supplies from contamination by providing alternative access to water.

#### CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies to all land uses where there is a need for new or improved watering facilities.

#### CRITERIA

##### General Criteria Applicable To All Purposes

A trough or tank shall have adequate capacity to meet the water requirements of the livestock and/or wildlife. This capacity may also be obtained by connecting troughs or tanks to storage tanks that feed the watering facility troughs or tanks by gravity flow. This will include the storage volume necessary to carry over between periods of replenishment.

Adequate storage capacity shall be required to provide emergency storage to the watering facility during times when water cannot be delivered to the facility. This storage may be supplied by gravity flow from an external storage tank or reservoir or within the facility

itself. The storage amount should be based on location of the facility and local power considerations.

Animal water requirements can be obtained from the NRCS Engineering Field Handbook, Table 11-1.

Where water supplies are dependable and livestock are checked daily, troughs with little water storage capacity may be used. Troughs or tanks must provide the daily water requirement of the livestock and provide access to the entire herd within a short period of time

The site shall be well drained; if not, drainage measures shall be provided. Areas adjacent to the trough or tank that will be trampled by livestock shall be graveled, paved, or otherwise treated to provide firm footing and reduce erosion. Design of the protective surface around the trough shall be in accordance with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 561, Heavy Use Area Protection.

Automatic water level control and/or overflow facilities shall be provided. Valves or pipes shall be protected by shields or covers to prevent damage by livestock. Overflow shall be piped to a stable or suitable point of release. The trough and outlet pipes shall be protected from freezing and ice damage. Freeze-proof troughs, trickle flow controls, or electric heaters may be used.

When a roof is placed over the trough to provide shade, the roof shall be designed for appropriate snow and wind loads and shall be durable to withstand anticipated livestock and wildlife activities.

All materials shall have a life expectancy that meets or exceeds the planned useful life of the installation. Common construction materials are reinforced concrete, steel, fiberglass, rubber tire tanks, plastic and wood. All designs

shall meet the industry standards for the material being used. Generally applicable design requirements and procedures can be found in the documents referenced at the end of this standard.

Concrete structures shall be constructed from a concrete mix producing a minimum compressive strength of 3,000 psi at 28 days. Galvanized steel tanks shall have a minimum thickness of 20 gauge. Plastic and fiberglass structures shall be made of ultraviolet resistant materials or shall have a durable coating to protect the structure from deterioration due to sunlight.

Double check valves or other measures prescribed in local plumbing codes, shall be used at tank inlets when tanks are connected into waterlines that have domestic users. Follow local health department regulations for types of valves need and installation of valves.

## CONSIDERATIONS

This practice may adversely affect cultural resources and must comply with GM 420, Part 401.

Topography should be evaluated to minimize trail erosion and flooding erosion from tank overflow.

Watering facilities should be accessible to small animals. Escape ramps for young livestock, birds and small animals should be installed. Install cattle guards that will prevent drowning of livestock. Consider using some form of tie down to prevent empty tanks from blowing off pads in high wind areas. .

Consideration should be given to accessibility and wall height of watering facilities used in locations where various types and sizes of livestock will be using the facility.

Adequate protection for livestock during the winter should be considered.

## PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for installing troughs and tanks shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose. If the trough and/or tank is a component of a system that includes additional

conservation practices, the information necessary to construct these additional practices will also be conveyed on the plans.

Development of plans will be guided by Engineering Field Handbook, Chapter 5, and shall be in accordance with National Engineering Manual, Parts 541 and 542.

## OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

An O&M plan specific to the type of installed trough or tank shall be provided to the landowner. The plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following provisions:

- check for debris, algae, sludge or other materials in the trough which may restrict the inflow or outflow system;
- check for leaks and repair immediately if any leaks are found;
- check the automatic water level device to insure proper operation;
- repair cattle guards as needed.
- check to ensure that adjacent areas are well protected against erosion;
- check to ensure the outlet pipe is freely operating and not causing erosion problems; and
- prepare guidance for winter weather, such as adding material in the storage area to allow for ice expansion without damage.

Algae and iron sludge accumulation should be addressed in areas with water quality that is known to cause problems. Chemicals such as copper sulfate and chlorine can be recommended as needed, as long as local rules and regulations are followed.

## **REFERENCES**

Engineering Field Handbook

National Engineering Manual

Manual of Steel Construction, American  
Institute of Steel Construction

Timber, National Design Specification for  
Wood, American Forest and Paper Association

Concrete, ACI 318, American Concrete  
Institute

Masonry, Building Code Requirement for  
Masonry Structures, ACI 530, American  
Concrete Institute